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Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4616th meeting

Thursday, 26 September 2002, 10.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Tafrov	(Bulgaria)
Members:	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Traoré
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Norway	Mr. Strømmen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Cunningham

Agenda

Consideration of the draft report of the Security Council to the General Assembly

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The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Consideration of the draft report of the Security Council to the General Assembly

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now proceed to the consideration of its annual report to the General Assembly, the draft of which has been prepared by the Secretariat.

Members of the Council have before them the draft report of the Security Council to the General Assembly for the period from 16 June 2001 to 31 July 2002, as circulated by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs on 9 August 2002, and a corrigendum thereto.

I should like to express appreciation to the Secretariat for the work it has undertaken in preparing this factual report.

As there is no list of speakers for this meeting, I would invite Council members who wish to take the floor to so indicate to the Secretariat as from now.

I shall now call on the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs to make an explanatory statement.

Mr. Kalomoh (Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs): The draft annual report of the Security Council for the period 16 June 2001 to 31 July 2002, to be submitted to the General Assembly in pursuance of Article 24, paragraph 3, of the United Nations Charter, has been prepared by the Secretariat, in line with the revised format agreed upon by the Security Council in 2002.

The format of the draft report before the Council provides a guide to the activities of the Council in a concise manner. In this connection, I would like to note that this is the first report prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Note by the President of the Council of 22 May 2002, which is contained in document S/2002/199, which were aimed at enhancing the quality of the report and accommodating the views expressed on the previous format.

Of particular interest is the introduction to the report, which contains an analytical summary of the work of the Council for the period covered by the report.

The draft report was circulated by me on 9 September 2002, in my capacity as Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to the current Members of the Security Council and to the members whose terms of office expired on 31 December 2001 for review and comment, if any.

A corrigendum containing a change requested by one Council Member is also before the Council.

The President: At this stage, I wish to thank the Secretariat for having prepared the draft report in a timely manner.

I would now like to call upon Council members who wish to state their views on this draft report.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): First of all, I would like to thank Mr. Kalomoh for introducing the report. I also want to begin by saying that today's meeting is, in some ways, a historic one. This, we believe, is the first time that Council members will be discussing openly the annual report before submitting it to the General Assembly for its consideration. The President of the Security Council will also refer to the provisional verbatim record of this meeting when he presents the report to the General Assembly. I hope this will explain to our colleagues here why I may have to deliver a slightly longer statement than usual, because if I do not deliver it, it will not enter the provisional verbatim records.

We believe that the new format of the annual report has actually rectified a defect in the way the Security Council reports were previously submitted to the General Assembly, a defect which was, incidentally, mentioned in "the bible" of the Security Council, which we know to be the "Bailey and Daws" publication. Bailey and Daws said:

> "[w]hile the report in its present form provides an occasion for United Nations Members to raise concerns about the work of the Council over the previous twelve months, it does very little to facilitate the raising of such concerns". (S. Bailey and S. Daws, *The Procedure of the UN Security Council*, 3rd ed., p. 290)

I hope we have taken care of this problem.

Together with our colleagues we are pleased to have made a small contribution to the improvement of

the format and content of the Security Council's Annual Report. It has been dramatically reduced in size, from 571 pages to approximately 291 pages and, as Mr. Kalomoh said, there was a last minute corrigendum that managed to deduct approximately 90 pages. Each page cut from the Report saves approximately $1,000, so we have saved about $300,000 this year in the preparation of this Report.

At the same time, more statistical information has been provided on the Security Council's deliberations and activities. Equally important there is an analytical overview in the introduction to the Report. We will not go into the details of the changes made; instead, in the text of the Report we have attached an explanatory note which sets out all the improvements made in the new format. We thought it would be useful to have a public record of these changes.

Let me also pay a tribute to my colleague, Christine Lee, who, as you know, worked very hard on this report, as well as many of your colleagues and experts, to produce this revised format.

Many observers of the Council sitting outside may be surprised that we have taken the time to provide the details of these small changes and improvements. We should explain why we mention these innovations. After 21 months on the Council, we have discovered that the Security Council, perhaps with some justification, is one of the most conservative institutions in the world today. In this year's General Assembly, the Secretary-General will be trying to instil a spirit of reform into both the General Assembly, including its subsidiary bodies, and the Secretariat.

This spirit of reform has not yet fully infected the Security Council. We have noticed that the Council is particularly conservative in its working methods and procedures. For example, despite our efforts to push for regular meetings of the Council's Working Group on procedures and working methods, there have only been six meetings of this Working Group during the period covered by the Report. We have also tried to formalize the system of drawing of names to determine the speakers' list for public meetings. So far, we have not succeeded. Similarly, it is remarkable that the Council's rules of procedure remain provisional after 57 years. Equally important, and I hope this is a major point, despite the proliferation of various forms of meetings of the Council, there is no agreement on their nomenclature and modalities. Having spoken with colleagues outside the Council, I can say there is considerable confusion about the meanings of the phrases: open meeting, closed meeting, private open meeting and so on. I think it is time to standardize this nomenclature.

The reluctance of the Council to institutionalize the Working Group on procedures and working methods is puzzling, because there have been significant improvements in the Council's working methods. For example, the Council has established new mechanisms for consultations with the troop-contributing countries (TCCs) and held public wrap-up sessions so that TCCs and the wider United Nations membership can share their views and interact in a frank and open manner with Council members. The TCCs have appreciated these changes.

A permanent United Nations Security Council Presidency web site has been set up so that non-Council Members can have quicker access to information related to the Security Council's work. The Council has also had more Arria-formula meetings to listen to the views of other external actors including the academia, media and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In the past year, the Council's deliberations have become more efficient and effective and more interactive and analytical through the use of fact sheets, assessment-based reports, and the practice of alternating between Council and non-Council members in public meetings of the Council.

Many of these developments are outlined in a report prepared by the Secretariat and circulated as Security Council document S/2002/603 dated 6 June 2002. We highly commend this report to United Nations Members as it provides a comprehensive account of changes in the Security Council's practices in 2001. I hope Member State will refer to this document when they speak on the issue of the Security Council's Annual Report in the General Assembly.

The Secretary-General has also noted these improvements in his report on the "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387), a report that came out on Monday 23 September 2002 and which he presented to regional groups. Yesterday, for example he presented it to the Asian group. In his report he pointed out:

> "The Security Council has significantly improved its working methods over the past few years — stimulated, in part, by the thoughtful

> deliberations of the Open-ended Working Group. The Council has become more transparent, offering greater opportunities for the wider membership of the United Nations to participate in its work. There has been an increased number of open meetings with participation by non-members of the Security Council, briefings for the wider membership of the Organization, and improved arrangements for consultations with troop-contributing countries." (A/57/387, para. 21)

Hence, the Secretary-General recommended, as part of its reform package that the Security Council "might consider codifying the recent changes in its own practice." (Ibid.)

Moving on from procedural innovations to the substance of the Report, we should acknowledge that the main criticism, which has been repeated year after year in each year's General Assembly debate of the Security Council's Annual Report, is that the Report is not analytical and therefore cannot be used as a basis for evaluating the work of the Council.

In theory, the complaint of the General Assembly Members is fair. That is why we made the analytical component of the Report one of the key themes in our speech at the General Assembly debate last year. However, after having served on the Council, we have come to realise that the Members of the General Assembly may be making an impossible demand of the Council. Given the heavy workload of the Council and the highly politicized and controversial nature of many of the issues discussed by the Council, it would take months of negotiations for the 15 Council Members to agree on a common analytical evaluation of the performance of the Council.

Despite this, this year's Annual Report contains a brief analytical overview that was skilfully drafted by the United Kingdom delegation during their Presidency of the Council in July. We congratulate Sir Jeremy Greenstock and his team for the work they did preparing this overview.

We also believe that the assessments and reflections of the individual Council members at today's debate will provide a good basis to evaluate the Council's performance. More importantly, while the processes of the Council's decision-making may often take place behind closed doors, the results of the Council's work are now much more clear and visible. Its resolutions, Presidential Statements and press statements are public documents. The results of peacekeeping operations authorized by the Security Council, now amounting to almost $3 billion annually, are also clearly visible. Hence, there is more than enough public data available to evaluate the performance of the Council when the General Assembly meets.

We would, therefore, like to suggest that a more constructive course for the General Assembly Members would be to try to formulate a set of agreed criteria that could be used to evaluate the performance of the Council. Some of the questions included could be the following: First, has the Council successfully managed the issues under its purview; have lives been saved or improved by the Council's work? Secondly, has the Council improved its procedures and working methods to generate greater efficiency and effectiveness in its work? Thirdly, has the Council become more transparent and open in its work and in its relationship with the wider United Nations membership? And fourthly, has the Council enhanced or diminished its credibility and prestige in the international community?

These are only preliminary suggestions. We are confident that our colleagues can improve on them and probably develop better criteria.

In our considered view, any objective evaluation of the performance of the Council for the period covered in this year's Annual Report should result in an overall positive assessment. It has been a good year. There have been many success stories. It would be impossible to cite all of them but it may be useful to cite a few as an illustrative list.

First, with regard to terrorism, the Council's response to the threat of terrorism after Sept 11, especially through its substantive resolutions, the Counter-Terrorism Committee chaired by Sir Jeremy Greenstock and the 1267 Sanctions Committee chaired by Ambassador Valdivieso, demonstrated the real value of the Council. The Security Council legitimized a global response. It also provided the necessary leadership to galvanize international action. If the Security Council had not existed on 12 September 2001, it would have had to be invented then. The fight against terrorism showed once again the indispensability of the Council.

Secondly, with regard to East Timor, the work of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East

Timor (UNTAET) paved the way for the birth of the Democratic Republic of East Timor on 20 May 2002, and East Timor will be admitted as a full United Nations Member by the General Assembly tomorrow. The Council's enlightened decision to establish the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor as a successor to UNTAET to continue to assist East Timor to maintain security and stability and carry out core areas of administration in the early years of its independence was reflective of the Council's commitment to institute clear and credible exit strategies for the United Nations.

Regarding Afghanistan, Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi helped shepherd the Bonn process and, through his effective leadership of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, he continues to ensure its implementation. Incidentally, as an aside, yesterday somebody was telling me that if there were free and fair elections in Afghanistan, Ambassador Brahimi would be elected President overnight. He is the most popular person in Afghanistan today. So far, Afghanistan has surpassed all expectations in moving back towards the path of peace and stability, even though many challenges remain. The problem, as we know, is that the security situation remains fragile, but there continues to be strong reluctance to consider the geographical expansion of the International Security Assistance Force. That has to be addressed by the Council.

Finally, with regard to Sierra Leone, the return of delicate peace and stability to Sierra Leone, following the successful elections held on 14 May 2002 and the ongoing efforts by the Sierra Leone Government to implement recovery measures, has bolstered the credibility of the Council and has reaffirmed the important role it plays.

But, to be completely candid, the Council is a human institution; therefore, it has its share of successes and failures. Some of its files clearly need more attention. Again, as an illustrative rather than a comprehensive list, let me cite a few examples.

The Working Group on sanctions was originally scheduled to complete its work in November 2000. Now, almost two years later, it remains trapped in a logjam. We hope that Council members will support Ambassador Belinga-Eboutou, as he tries to revitalize this Working Group.

The Middle East crisis has been aggravated in recent months. However, the Council adopted resolution 1397 (2002), which was a landmark resolution that reaffirmed the vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, can live side by side within secure and recognized borders. We hope that the Quartet, a new diplomatic vehicle, will work to implement it.

On the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Council has, so far, not been able to follow up decisively on the initiative proposed by the Security Council mission to the Great Lakes region in April 2002. That could affect the credibility of the Council as well as its future missions. However, in view of the recent agreements signed by the Democratic Republic of the Congo with Rwanda and Uganda, the Council is now provided with new opportunities to respond positively to the Secretary-General's recommendations on how the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo can play a bigger role.

Somalia was clearly one of the strategic orphans — and I hope that phrase will not be misunderstood — of the Council until Norway took it up. Still, the Council needs to develop a comprehensive policy to deal with the security and humanitarian dimensions of the Somalia issue.

Liberia was also one of the Council's strategic orphans until Ambassador Zinser of Mexico recommended a fresh look at it. Clearly, the Council needs to have a comprehensive and coherent policy to protect its major investments in West Africa.

Finally, the increasing complexities relating to the issue of refugees and internally displaced persons from situations in the Council's many conflict files have not been adequately addressed by the Council today. Indeed, the Council needs to establish a cohesive and coordinated approach in cooperation with other relevant United Nations bodies, such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, just to name a few.

Neither of those lists is exhaustive. We have not mentioned many significant issues, including Iraq, which is the subject of the day, Western Sahara, Georgia, Cyprus, the Balkans, and so on. But in the limited time we have, it would be impossible to list all the successful and less successful files. Nevertheless,

when the General Assembly meets to review this year's Annual Report, we hope that they will refer to the evaluations made by the members of the Council who have been actively involved in the management of those difficult issues.

Finally, in conclusion, I hope, Mr. President, that you will permit me to end my remarks by suggesting that it may be useful practice for members of the Council to also provide recommendations on how the Council can improve its performance in subsequent years. For our part, we would like to suggest at least two areas.

First, I think the Council should respond positively to the suggestion made by the Secretary-General that we should "codify" improvements made by the Council. Both the institutional structure of the Council and the work of the Council have grown in size and complexity. Yet, there is no single adequate description of the full range of activities conducted by the Council, which now include public meetings, private meetings, informal consultations, meetings with troop-contributing countries, working groups, formal and informal friends groups, contact groups, and so on. It is time for someone to draw a full picture of the total architecture of the Council. Once we have clearly drawn the big picture, it will be easier to review the Council.

At the same time, the Security Council should also respond positively to the Secretary-General's efforts to imbue the United Nations family with a new spirit of reform. One way of introducing a culture of innovation to the Council is for the informal Working Group on the working methods and procedures to be more active. Each Council member should designate an expert on organizational innovation and improvement, and that Council Working Group should meet regularly. Hopefully, that Working Group can make suggestions that will improve the working methods, reduce the workload, enable the Council to spend its time focusing on those issues that require the most attention and on its Charter responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The second suggestion we would like to make is that the Council should meet periodically to do a strategic review of its work. While its workload has grown by leaps and bounds — and I think that is documented in the reports — the Council has not found opportunities to do a strategic overview of all the work done. There is no conscious effort to prioritize the work of the Council. Often, the most urgent, rather than the most important, issues are given the most attention. Annually there is only one occasion for such a strategic review of the work of the Council. That takes places during the annual retreat of the Security Council with the Secretary-General. We commend the Secretary-General for hosting his retreats, but it may be useful to find other occasions for a comprehensive and strategic review of the work of the Council. All organizations find it healthy to do this. The Council should do no less.

It may be useful for the Council to conduct from time to time an in-depth review and evaluation of its own action or often non-action, as the case may be, especially on the long-standing files so as to invigorate them. It may be too easy to blame the protagonists concerned. Instead of blaming others, the Council should stop and ask itself, why have these situations not improved? Merely responding by issuing more press, presidential statements and resolutions may not be enough in most instances. We should review and see if we have become too comfortable with conservative and safe positions, instead of looking for alternative and creative solutions.

The credibility of the Security Council will only be eroded over time if the Council is habitually seen to be unable to meet its responsibilities with regard to those long-standing files. Its press releases, Presidential Statements and resolutions could be ignored if there is a perceived gap between the Council's intentions and its actual accomplishments.

Finally, I hope that, as was the case under the Irish presidency of the Council in October 2001, after the General Assembly debate on the Annual Report scheduled for next month, the Council will discuss the comments and suggestions raised during the debate to reflect on the key points made, so as to consider further improvements to the Council's working methods, work and future reports. Last year, Singapore submitted a brief summary of the key points made at the general debate to facilitate such a discussion. We would be happy to do so again this year. The Council's discussion of the points raised at the General Assembly will go a long way towards meeting our common objective of building a relationship of trust and confidence between the General Assembly and the Security Council.

One more final point, I apologize for having read out at great length the statement, but if I had not read it out, it would not appear in the provisional verbatim record, and therefore it would not be circulated. My apologies to all my colleagues for having done this to them.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): I had a text to read out, but I think that after Ambassador Mahbubani's long statement, I will instead contribute to a spontaneous discussion, at the risk of having appear in the verbatim record statements that are not carefully weighed word by word.

Kishore Mahbubani's final comment was interesting. It was, in the end, a practical recommendation. I think that if we wish to have lively debates, we must make sure that texts such as that just read out by Ambassador Mahbubani can be included in the verbatim record without first having to be read out. That way, we would then be able to have the conversation that I am now trying to start. I think that this is an additional reform that we should consider.

I would like to begin by welcoming the extraordinary determination demonstrated by Ambassador Mahbubani, Christine Lee and the entire Singaporean team in transforming the annual report. I think that is a small but absolutely necessary task. We no longer have an unusable compilation but a report enabling anyone to find an immediate record of our work during a given year. Not only have we saved money for the United Nations, which in itself is a good thing — in fact, we will have to decide among ourselves what to do with those savings — but also and more importantly, we are making available to all Member countries a genuine working tool.

As did our friend Kishore, I would like to include Ambassador Greenstock in my congratulations because the introduction is, I think, the beginning of an analytical section. The Security Council is a slowly evolving animal, but I think that the example given by Ambassador Greenstock is a good start on an analytical section, which could gradually find its way into the beginning of the annual report.

Beyond my comments on the annual report, I think that today's discussion is an opportunity to reflect once more on our working methods. What strikes me in listening to Ambassador Mahbubani, as compared to his statement last year in the General Assembly, is that in his view we have made a great deal of progress. I think that is an accurate judgement. If we take a look at the development of the Security Council's working methods since its creation more than 50 years ago, we can see that we have gone from a period of hibernation to a period of increasingly rapid development. Some would say that the progress is not yet rapid enough. But I am struck by how the Security Council has been able to develop its working methods pragmatically. If we compare the Council to the General Assembly, we could say that in this friendly competition, the Council has taken the lead. When we take a look at the way in which the monthly programme is decided on and prepared, when we see the goals we set for ourselves, and when we think about the wrap-up sessions, which are dear to some and criticized by others, we can say that in terms of organization, we are making progress while still retaining the necessary flexibility in our work, which is dictated by constantly changing events.

Ambassador Mahbubani spoke of transparency. It is true that never in the history of the United Nations has the Security Council held so many public meetings. We have broken all records. He was right in mentioning our openness to civil society through our Arria-formula meetings, which enable us to meet with the representatives of non-governmental organizations, who come to enrich our work and who transform the Council's image by showing its ability to listen, beyond the circle of States, to all those who can make a useful contribution.

Aside from those meetings with civil society, our ability to work with other Member States has also improved. Ambassador Greenstock once again deserves to be commended, this time as Chairman of the Counter-Terrorism Committee. His actions are an example of what we all should be doing when we have the responsibility of chairing a committee or working group. The ad hoc working group on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa is also a very good working tool, which we should use even more.

I would add a last point. Security Council missions beyond the Chamber, to countries, have become for us — and also, I think, for our partners in the various regions that we visit — an absolutely indispensable element for working better with the countries concerned and with regional and subregional organizations.

Those examples show that we have indeed been able to evolve.

Ambassador Mahbubani referred to the successes and frustrations that we have had over the past year. I would mention an issue to which he referred: sanctions. It is true that for two years we have tried to agree on and to adopt a document. We are deadlocked. Nevertheless, we can observe that after the decade of sanctions, we have been able to develop a tool that is at our disposal alongside words, statements, resolutions and the use of force. Today, sanctions are a more refined and more targeted tool. We have introduced time limits. I think that is a major advance, even if some seated at the Council table do not agree. We have also begun to pay attention to humanitarian consequences. I think that those are two areas of progress, among others, that demonstrate that on that issue too the Council has been able to evolve in the right direction.

I will conclude by asking about one suggestion made by Ambassador Mahbubani. Is it necessary to codify all of this? At the risk of surprising my colleagues, I would say that I gladly side with British pragmatism. In France, we are obsessed with codifying everything, beginning with our Constitution. Experience has shown that now, and at an ever faster pace, we are changing our Constitution because the world is changing very quickly. As for the English, they do not have a written Constitution, and they are doing very well. I think that perhaps we should follow the wisdom and pragmatism of the British in our working methods. It is good to develop our working methods. I believe that we have been to do so fairly quickly. Let us continue to do so without getting bogged down too much in codification.

Mr. Strømmen (Norway): Let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on convening this meeting regarding the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. Norway continues to attach the highest importance to transparency in the working methods of the Security Council. The full sharing of information and views with the wider membership of the Organization on the issues before the Council is a pivotal aspect of the Council exercising its mandate. In this regard, let me also pay tribute to the delegation of Singapore for its effort to enhance technical aspects of the work of the Council, including the annual report. Norway fully supports the draft report as presented.

Above all, the Security Council is a political organ at the disposal of Member States to resolve conflicts representing a threat to international peace and security. This also implies that the working methods of the Council may need a certain degree of flexibility in order to facilitate creative approaches suited to the challenges at hand.

During the past year the Council has dealt with a vast number of issues. To a considerable degree, public meetings have been used as a means of sharing information and views on those issues. However, Norway continues to believe and argue that an even larger proportion of the briefings and material prepared by the Secretariat could and should be made directly available to the wider membership.

The positions of the Government of Norway on the various issues on the Council's agenda are well known through our earlier specific deliberations. I will not spend our valuable time repeating those positions here today. Rather, I will focus on areas in which the Council has taken important steps through the use of three particular mechanisms at its disposal.

First, to enhance the cooperation with troop-contributing countries, the Council regularly convenes consultation meetings prior to mandate considerations, in accordance with resolution 1353 (2001). Importantly, the troop-contributing countries assume the political and personnel risk associated with United Nations operations and must therefore be consulted fully by the Council. It is imperative that this include early consultations at the stage where plans are made and proposals formulated in the system. To this end, the Council in January of this year established a new mechanism for more such informal consultations. As the Chair of this mechanism, I encourage all major troop-contributing countries to fully explore this vehicle for engagement with Council members, as well as with the Secretariat. Importantly, the new mechanism allows for troop-contributing countries themselves to raise emerging issues, as they see fit. We saw this being played out in full in August when the mechanism was utilized on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone.

Secondly, the Council has on two occasions in 2002 visited areas of conflict or areas emerging from conflict in Africa. In February, under the leadership of Ambassador Kolby, a full Council met with Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia and President Isaias Afwerki of Eritrea. The meetings took place on the eve of the border decision, in accordance with the Algiers Agreement. The border decision was subsequently

embraced by both sides and is currently being implemented in close cooperation with the United Nations. In May, under the leadership of Ambassador Levitte, a full Council met with leaders of the Great Lakes region in order to promote peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Recently, we have seen steps in the right direction taken by several of the involved parties, in accordance with the encouragements provided by the Council. The Council continues to be actively engaged on these issues. The missions to Ethiopia and Eritrea and the Great Lakes have illustrated that Council missions are a useful tool for engaging the parties to certain conflicts. Based on these useful experiences, we fully support the concept of Council missions. At the same time, cognizant of the concerns related to costs raised by some non-members of the Council, we would be favourably inclined to reduce the size of such missions to a representative core consisting of some six to eight members.

Thirdly and finally, the Council, in July of this year, mandated a panel of experts to provide independent information on violations of the arms embargo on Somalia with a view to improving its enforcement. Panels of experts can in certain instances provide independent and authoritative information, alerting the international community to activities that undermine the quest for peace. As such, the panels may play an important role in forcing actors to pay a political price for actions that run counter to the objective of peace.

Through membership on the Council, Norway has consistently sought to raise the Council's attention to the Somalia problem. The country has been without a central Government for more than 10 years and the arms embargo established by the Council in 1992 has hardly been enforced. The steps taken by the Council this year have thus been long overdue. These steps must be further built upon in order to restore the United Nations credibility vis-à-vis that wartorn country. The ongoing efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development to bring peace and order to Somalia, through the conference facilitated by Kenya on 15 October, has wide support from the international community. Importantly, the United Nations must stand ready to do its part to assist fully and actively in Somalia's return to normalcy. Norway will continue to contribute actively to the issue of Somalia as part of an overall focus on African issues.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): I am very grateful to Mr. Kalomoh for firing the starting gun on this.

I think we have a report this year which is genuinely interesting, certainly by comparison with previous years, and I echo Ambassador Levitte and others who give the right credit to Ambassador Mahbubani, Minister Lee and the Singapore team for not just driving us to do this, but for providing the main substance for how to do this. I really think it has been a very valuable exercise and I admire the way that Ambassador Mahbubani has led it. I shall come in a moment to comment on some things in his statement, because, along with Jean-David Levitte, I would very much hope that this will be an interactive discussion and I shall have some things to say about it.

It has been an extraordinary year for the Council in a number of ways. Of course, 11 September set the tone and Afghanistan was an extremely important theme, but, after several years on the Council, I get the sense that we are really beginning to move in the right direction in a number of ways. In this past year, we have also been almost uniquely busy. The previous record for the number of open meetings was set in November 2001, under the Jamaican presidency. The United Kingdom, for a number of reasons beyond our control, pipped that in July and we had 29 open meetings. No doubt, that record will fall quite quickly soon in the future, but the intensity of what is being demanded of the Council by the nature of the world, by globalization and by at least some partial successes of the Council is, I think, to be remarked on.

Quantity on its own is clearly not enough, however, and I just want to comment on two other aspects: the quality of the Council's work and transparency. Quality is going to have some subjective judgements attached to it, but I want to preface what I say with a comment about the nature of the Council and its place in the firmament of the people and institutions dealing with maintaining international peace and security. We are primarily responsible, but let us not make the mistake of believing that we have to be solely responsible. This Organization, the United Nations, works best — and really only works at all — if every Member State takes up its own responsibilities. This is a forum of nations and the Security Council, being also made up of 15 nations at any one time, is working from national instructions and is not able on

its own, in those circumstances, to get everything right without a great deal of coordination and cooperation.

I think Afghanistan has been a very good example of this over the past year because, not least through our being able to tap into the brilliant diplomacy of someone like Lakhdar Brahimi, we have been able, as the United Nations, to create the framework for things going right in Afghanistan. However, the United Nations on its own, and certainly the Security Council on its own, has not been able to produce the instruments for that being done. It has been necessary to draw on a number of other sources of that — quite clearly, from the power and energy of the United States in settling the security in Afghanistan; quite clearly, from the enormous work done by the humanitarian agencies; and quite clearly, from the money poured into all that business by those Member States that had the capacity to do so and were determined not to see Afghanistan go wrong. But the coordinating activity of the Security Council and the legitimacy and the framework that it gave to all those exercises were indispensable and very well judged as we went along.

In Africa, which remains the area where we have to do most of our work in rather more complex circumstances, I think that we are also learning how to have an effect, not least through our influence on those who themselves have to be the instruments of success in bringing Africa to greater peace and prosperity.

I think that turning Sierra Leone around, and seeing that crystallized in the elections that were held during the past year, was a particular point of satisfaction for the Security Council, after bad experiences in 1999 and 2000. But it was not possible for the Security Council to do that without an enormous contribution on the ground from the peacekeepers involved there, from the leadership of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, from the Government of Sierra Leone itself, from those nations that particularly wanted to add their own input and see it go right and from civil society, the non-governmental organizations and the United Nations funds, agencies and programmes which were coordinated on the ground, not least under the advice of the Security Council mission of October 2000. That is another example of how the Security Council reaches out to other instruments and plays a coordinating, motivating, monitoring and driving role.

Sometimes we cannot get that right. In the Middle East we have much more of a problem because of the polarization of politics. Although the Security Council can always do better in these areas, it is necessary to remember that, beyond the Security Council, every Member State involved in a crisis or other situation has to play its own role in the understanding of the collective nature of United Nations business. States cannot play a unilateral role in the modern world, but they must play a role that adds power to the collective objectives of the United Nations. If that is not forthcoming in a particular situation, the Security Council is hamstrung.

I think that it is worth noting that, as we have made improvements over the past two or three years, the habit of consensus in the Council has empirically grown. We pass almost all of our resolutions by a vote of 15 to none. We all know that that adds power to the effect of the Council's work, and it is something that we have learned to go for and that we should stick to in every application that we possibly can. Resolutions 1352 (2001) and 1382 (2001) on Iraq are examples of that. It would be very good if we could continue that experience. It has happened in a number of other areas, not least with regard to resolution 1397 (2002) on the Middle East peace process, from which we should draw lessons to see where the Security Council is best able to work effectively in the most complex situations. But we will not always be able to manage that.

I agree with Ambassador Levitte that our missions have evolved remarkably, and I pay tribute to what he himself has done on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with his three annual forays into that particular difficult maelstrom — we will miss him in that respect.

But we have had an effect on the parties on the ground by personally visiting their offices and showing that we were determined to require them to implement the agreements that they themselves willingly entered into. That is another example of interaction between the Council as a collective body and the individual responsibilities of Member States.

We should note also that there are some major areas where the Security Council has been prevented from entering. We can think of a number of serious crises — crises within States, which have an international character, and between States, where there is still a huge danger of conflict — which have not

been brought to the Council. I cannot think of any such crises that have benefited from not being brought to the Council. Of course, there are some issues that the Council does not resolve; but I do not believe that avoiding the Council is empirically the right way to go.

On transparency, I am with France and Norway, and certainly with Singapore: we can do more. I would not mind virtually all of our meetings being open, except when we are negotiating closely on texts or on issues which just cannot afford to be in the public eye. But I think that transparency adds to the collective nature of the Security Council, which works for all States Members of the United Nations, and if the Counter-Terrorism Committee has been able to make some advances in that area, it is only because I perceived that Member States were very willing to respond to the necessary business of meeting their obligations under resolution 1373 (2001). I attribute that transparency to Member States for responding in a transparent atmosphere, rather than to any new initiative from within the Counter-Terrorism Committee. It has helped us to stay together in the Committee but, much more importantly, it has helped the United Nations membership to stay together on perhaps the most important new initiative that the Security Council has taken in the past year.

I look forward to an interesting and interactive debate within the General Assembly. I think that that is the point of this report — to have a good debate in the General Assembly. Of course, non-Council members can sling arrows at the Council if they wish, but I hope they will also pay attention to the realities of how we have to work in the context of each conflict, and I hope that they contribute to the continuation of achievable improvements in the Council by making constructive, as well as critical, remarks.

I would add a further question to the four questions that Ambassador Mahbubani posed in his statement, relating to whether the Council has responded adequately to the greater demands put upon it by the process of globalization. I think that we have to recognize, as he did in his presentation, that the world is moving faster than the Council —Ambassador Levitte referred to that. The Council is catching up, but we must move further if the world is not to move on ahead of us.

As for the detailed improvements that he suggested in his conclusion, yes, I agree with them. But I am not sure that the informal working group on procedure is quite the point. The point is for Ambassadors in this Council to use their individual responsibilities and powers to make a difference in the way that this Council produces results. If it is the Ambassador of France who is suggesting a British pragmatism, who am I to suggest that that is not the way to go forward? I believe that he has touched on the right point there: we do not need to institutionalize; we need to achieve results in practice. I think we are beginning to show how to do that, and I will certainly do the best I can to follow the spirit of Mahbubani and Singapore and achieve those results.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): This year, the report of the Council to the General Assembly has a new format: it is more focused and shorter. The cost of production has thus been reduced. That is in line with the desire and aspirations of the wider membership. It is also a result of cooperation and efforts on the part of Council members. In this respect, I would like to mention the leadership of Singapore and the contribution made by the Secretariat.

The past year saw improvements in the working methods of the Council that led to increased transparency and effectiveness. Maintaining the Council's authority and striving for consensus have increasingly become our shared goal, and we hope that such positive momentum can be sustained. As the main body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, the Security Council has, in the past year, considered important issues in a timely manner and taken rapid action to deal with them.

In particular, following the 11 September terrorist attacks, the Council swiftly adopted resolution 1373 (2001) and established the Counter-Terrorism Committee, which has played an indispensable role in coordinating the international fight against terrorism. At the critical moment when the Afghan situation took a dramatic turn, a united Council, through its swift decision, played a major role in pushing for comprehensive implementation of the Bonn Agreement and elimination of the Taliban and Al Qaeda. The Council focused its attention on various hot spots in Africa, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola and Sierra Leone. It also dispatched special missions to gather specific information on the ground.

Thanks to the efforts of the Council and of all parties concerned, there have been positive

developments in African conflicts. However, there is still a gap between the work of the Council and the expectations of African countries. Therefore, the Council should seize the opportunity to redouble its efforts and to actively support the work of regional organizations such as the African Union so that its efforts to resolve African conflicts can bear fruit.

It is also worth noting that the Council's role concerning the Middle East-Palestinian question has fallen short of expectations. Despite the statements of the Council and the resolutions it has adopted, the Middle East situation has yet to improve. In addition, the Council still faces the question of how to deal with the Afghan situation: how to help the Afghan Interim Authority to improve the situation throughout its territory and to create favourable conditions for rebuilding the country. In short, how to fulfil, in a timely manner, the responsibility entrusted to it by the Charter, and how to play its role when problems arise that threaten international peace and security, is still a great challenge for the Council, which still faces many obstacles and real problems. That is a question that deserves our continued reflection and exploration.

Mr. Corr (Ireland): First of all, I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for arranging today's public meeting of the Council on the annual report to the General Assembly. Like others, I should also like to pay warm tribute to Ambassador Mahbubani, to Minister Lee and to everyone else in the Singapore Mission for the commitment in preparing this report, largely in response — as Ambassador Mahbubani said — to the comments of Member States in the general debate with regard to making it shorter, more analytical and more reflective. Singapore has been a good friend of the important process of making the Council's work more transparent, more open and more reflective. With this report, we have taken an important step in that direction, which we very much appreciate.

I want to make a few general points, some of which reflect comments already made, on the work of the Council and on how the Council operates, as well as on some specific issues on the Council's agenda, as dealt with in the report for the past year.

The Security Council is, of course, at the very centre of the multilateral system and of international cooperation. It enjoys unique legitimacy and authority in international law. It deals with a wide canvas of issues; the monthly agenda — as has been said — can often be fairly stretched. Inevitably, the tyranny of time pressures and events does not always allow for the reflection we would want to give to linkages between issues, to thematic focus and to operational coherence in what we do. The test, as Ambassador Greenstock and others have pointed out, is not necessarily the number of meetings we have, but the progress we make in advancing the Council's objectives — especially where it matters, which is the task of safeguarding and advancing peace and preventing conflicts.

The fundamental point that we must always get right, as Ambassador Strømmen pointed out, is to address the mandate given to us, which essentially is that the Council has the primary — not sole, but primary — responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Ambassador Mahbubani made the point that in some ways, the Council may be one of the more conservative institutions in the world. But in safeguarding its Charter responsibility and mandate, the Council is surely right to be conservative. And, while accepting the concept of British pragmatism, it is also important, as one British philosopher said, that we not let too much daylight into what at times must be a very complex set of negotiations and assessments among all Council members.

There is always an intersection between the world of power and capitals and the instruments of multilateral decision-making and responsibilities. That is as it should be. The Council has 15 members, each bringing to the table its own judgements and perspectives. But in its work, what unites the Council and is its central theme — which Ireland has certainly found impressive during our period on the Council — is the sense of Council members that they are also servants of an ideal that, as Ambassador Levitte said, retains its importance, even after nearly 60 years. The cooperation among nations in safeguarding the peace, preventing wars, reacting to crisis and rebuilding after conflicts is indispensable to maintaining and advancing international peace.

Isaiah Berlin titled one of his books "The Crooked Timber of Humanity", and that is a fundamental point. Life and politics are untidy; many of the crises that the Council deals with are both complex and difficult. They can be a cauldron of forces; spirits summoned from the deep when conflicts start are not easily put back into the deep. So the world that the Council deals with in the issues on its agenda

are inherently untidy in many respects. They are extremely complex, and there is rarely a straight line from A to Z. So the Council must, using its best judgement, take due stock of the situation, advance its goals and give proper monitoring to that.

In terms of Council procedures, I should like to make a few general observations. I think it is important that the Council, while recognizing the interlinkages between issues, not encroach on other United Nations bodies or on their roles. That is a theme that has emerged in the general debates on the Council report over the past several years. The United Nations machinery across the range of institutions and committees must be respected, and at times there is a sense that the Council, while rightly debating and assessing thematic issues, needs to be careful that the standing of other United Nations bodies is not diminished and that their prerogatives are fully respected.

At the intergovernmental level, it is clear that we need to talk more to one another, as was pointed out in last year's debate in the General Assembly. The United Nations family of institutions also need to talk more to one another about what is done in the Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the funds and programmes, and so on.

We also need more follow-up of Council decisions and implementation of Council resolutions. In my delegation's view, we should consider establishing more Council committees. In the ad hoc Working Group on Africa, chaired by Ambassador Koonjul, we have a good example of a committee that has done excellent work. It would be a valuable innovation to look at whether committees in other areas considering particular thematic or geographical issues could perhaps follow up on them. That is certainly an innovation that we would see as worth considering.

With regard to Council missions, we think they are a very valuable instrument. There was the mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea, led by Ambassador Kolby, and the mission to the Great Lakes, chaired by Ambassador Levitte. We would be open to and see merit in smaller missions. But there will always be a tension as to the numbers — how representative a smaller group would be. So we would see value in the idea of, perhaps, one, three or four Council members going on a particular mission. It would also, I think, logistically make it more possible to use this instrument more regularly and in a more valuable way.

On the question of themes and of wrap-up debates, we think that they are a very worthwhile innovation in the Council's work over the recent period. The wrap-up debate does not have to be held every month, but we certainly favour the concept, as during the Singapore presidency, of its being open to non-Council members to speak — perhaps, as we agreed, with a limitation for everyone, including Council members, of three minutes each. But we thought it worked extremely well, and we would like to see this continued.

The eleventh of September, of course, overshadowed the Council's work during the year. We can take pride in the fact that the Council acted resolutely and decisively. Resolution 1373 (2001) provides a very valuable scaffolding across the board in the fight against terrorism. The Counter-Terrorism Committee works extremely well, and I join others in paying tribute to Ambassador Greenstock for his work in explaining and outlining goals and objectives to the wider United Nations membership and to the international community. It has worked extremely well in a very sensitive area, and I think that much of that is due to the openness that has been adopted.

On Afghanistan, there has been important progress, with the Bonn agreements and the work of Mr. Brahimi and of the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA), and the role of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). What is now important is to stand by the people of Afghanistan in the reconstruction process, so that the opportunity that is there for the people of Afghanistan after many years of great suffering is fully seized.

This is not just a narrow point of emphasis. The international community must be seen to be effective in its engagement with Afghanistan, and over the coming period it will be important, therefore, for the Council to maintain that level of engagement.

On the Middle East, in terms of the Council's work, we have made considerable progress over the year, with resolution 1397 (2002), adopted in March, affirming the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, existing side by side within secure and recognized borders. We know where we need to go. What is now important is to redouble the efforts to get there.

We appreciate the fact that there is now a monthly briefing of the Council on the Middle East. This has been a very valuable and important contribution to the work of the Council on the Middle East.

On Africa, it is clear that if the phrase "We are a community", as has been said, has any meaning, it has to find an expression in Africa. The Ad Hoc Group on Africa has got off to a very good start. We have had a serious level of engagement with issues related to the Great Lakes, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Sierra Leone, the Mano River Union region, Burundi, Somalia and Angola.

The central point here is that with the African Union and the development of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), there is now a real prospect for advancing the interests of Africa and supporting Africa. But this will require, as President Mbeki and others said, an enormous level of engagement by the international community in supporting the efforts of Africa. This is something to which the Council will need to pay due attention and give much commitment in the period ahead.

Finally, let me thank the Secretariat, since this is an appropriate moment to do so, for all of its commitment to and support for the work of the Council during the year, which my delegation much appreciated.

Mr. Aguilar Zinser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I agree with Ambassador Jeremy Greenstock's statement that this has been ar extraordinary year for the Security Council. There are still a few months remaining, however, during which we may confront the most important events in the life of our Council. Consequently, the submission of this report to the General Assembly is taking place in circumstances in which the Council is now more than ever before under intense scrutiny by the international community and closely watched by Members of the United Nations and international public opinion.

Accordingly, we are pleased that this report is the outcome of agreement in the Council to improve its presentation and that it includes, for the first time, an analytical section that focuses on areas of Council activity that are of interest to the entire membership of the United Nations.

We echo the congratulations and support expressed by some members of the Council to Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani, Minister Lee and their team for their contribution, which has given us this useful tool, which enables us more accurately to report on the activities of the Council in the course of the current year in its work of maintaining international peace and security.

Intensive deliberations led to the adoption of the criteria for the preparation of this report. My delegation participated actively, sharing the vision and approach of Ambassador Mahbubani and his desire to produce a substantive document that would truly be useful to the community of nations.

We congratulate Ambassador Jeremy Greenstock for the contribution he made to the preparation of the introduction, which was the subject of a lively discussion among the membership and which appears in this report; it is, in fact, the most important innovation in the report. As Ambassador Levitte — who himself was a very important supporter of this initiative — said, the Council moves forward slowly. This certainly represents a victory. But discussions are ongoing, and agreement has not yet been reached among all members of the Council. Some members remain reluctant to move forward along the path that was set out in the process of preparing the report.

Today we can consider that slow movement forward as a victory; however, more victories must be achieved. My delegation is pleased, but not yet satisfied, with what has been achieved. Mexico hopes that future developments, particularly in terms of the analytical section, could include, among other innovations, the adoption of clear and precise indicators to measure progress in the Council's work, as well as a section containing proposals to improve the working procedures and performance of our Organization.

Mexico has followed with great interest the work in the Council as well as the efforts made to turn it into a body that has closer ties to the rest of the membership of the United Nations. We know that, as an elected member, we are in the Council only for a short period of time. For this reason, and for other key reasons, we want to make a particular and extraordinary effort, in the same spirit as Ambassador Mahbubani, to ensure that, when we leave the Security Council, we will have contributed to bringing it much closer to the rest of the United Nations community; that its working procedures will be far more transparent; and that progress will

have been made towards the establishmeat of mechanisms aimed at creating linkages among the decisions taken in the Security Council and those of other United Nations bodies.

In that connection, we believe that monthly wrap-up meetings provide an excellent opportunity for an interactive discussion among members and non-members. We will continue to support this becoming a regular practice. However, there are still members with reservations that must be carefully and respectfully considered, so that agreements can be reached in the near future.

Measures have been adopted to improve the working procedures in the Security Council as a whole. Some of these are very simple, such as assigning seats to non-members in our discussions. Others are of greater importance, such as the publication of the Secretary-General's reports and the agenda, and the very important contribution of the fact sheets on items before the Council.

Given our awareness of what has taken place, we want to thank the members of the Security Council secretariat, whose openness to the measures discussed and proposed here with a view to gradually making the Security Council far more transparent and more closely connected to the rest of the Organization. They have remained receptive to these ideas and they have facilitated implementation of the measures we have adopted. They have also been responsive with regard to the issuance of documents.

We have also worked to strengthen the work of the Secretariat in connection with the new work of the Council, such as the field missions of the entire Security Council as a whole and of the sanctions committees, in which my country has actively participated.

We welcome the increasing trend of the Security Council to hold more meetings open to participation or attendance by all Members of the United Nations. We reiterate that we must implement the provisions of rule 48 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, which stipulates the practice of holding open public meetings. We hope that the resistance to change of some Council members will diminish, and that there will be closer links between the members of the Security Council and those of the General Assembly.

We shall continue to work within the informal working group to achieve those ends. Similarly, the General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform is another area where we are working to institutionalize our working procedures and rules of procedure, which paradoxically have remained provisional for more than 50 years.

Mexico's commitment to the principle of transparency is unswerving. We want to do away with the barriers to a more substantive report that reflects the daily work of the Council. We hope that this endeavour will succeed. It is one to which my delegation and others are committed.

Mr. Traoré (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): First of all, allow me to thank Assistant Secretary-General Kalomoh for his presentation. I would also like to thank Ambassador Mahbubani for the efforts made by his team with a view to improving the working methods of the Council, as well as for his complete and extremely relevant statement.

My delegation welcomes the convening of today's meeting devoted to a preliminary consideration of the draft report of the Security Council to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. This welcome initiative is in the context of the Council's determination to reform its working methods and contribute further to strengthening its role in maintaining international peace and security.

The draft report before us today is a reflection of our common will to take stock of our activities for the period of 16 June 2001 to 31 July 2002, and to draw lessons from it with a view to improving our future work. My delegation believes first of all that, from the standpoint both of presentation and of content, the draft report is a clear improvement. Indeed, instead of a simple compilation or quantitative description of our activities, we have this time come up with the outline of a document which is more analytical and which takes into account the basic criticism that has been levelled many times at us by Member States. The draft report has also become more concise, avoiding overlapping and repetition with respect to items already dealt with by other United Nations bodies.

With regard to items on the agenda of the Council, it would seem that the introductory part of the draft report is not simply a narrative but rather a lucid and forward-looking analysis. The draft report also deals with general issues, such as our campaign against

terrorism, sanctions regimes and thematic items that are just as important.

During the period under review, it is undeniable that the Council, thanks to the contribution of all its members, has made considerable progress in improving its working methods. It has also broadened the scope of its activities by making fundamental changes in the way it communicates with other Members States and civil-society organizations. This was reflected, inter alia, by the more frequent holding of public meetings and of Arria-formula meetings, along with monthly wrap-up sessions, which have enabled us to begin a dialogue with a view to greater transparency and broader openness.

We cannot fail to mention the missions dispatched by the Council to conflict zones in Africa; these have turned out to be most useful. Moreover, we welcome the regular reports on the activities of the Council's working groups and sanctions committees. We should also point out the increased consultations between Council members and troop-contributing countries in evaluating peacekeeping operations. This allows for greater interaction, thereby avoiding decisions that could harm the proper conduct of such operations.

But this significant progress should not make us lose sight of the efforts we ought to make to achieve our goals. We must, in that regard, strengthen and improve our action with a view to meeting the requirements linked to our basic duty to maintain international peace and security. Among those goals, we attach particular importance to greater openness with other Member States, better coordination with the various actors in the United Nations system and in other institutions, and to fine-tuning our working methods in order to make our work more effective and efficient.

Finally, my delegation thinks that the Council should consider the most appropriate ways of ensuring the effective and full implementation of the many resolutions, decisions and recommendations we take together. We are convinced that, far from being utopian, these objectives are indeed achievable if we show more commitment, more determination and collective will.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, we wish to thank you for convening this meeting, which shows that the Council is giving additional importance to its annual report to the General Assembly. We are pleased that the efforts by Council members to improve the format of the report and to make it more valuable will be met by a favourable response from all United Nations Members in the General Assembly.

Syria supports the format and substance of this report. We thank Mr. Kalomoh and all members of his Secretariat team for their efforts in preparing this report. The positive spirit in which Council members have examined the importance of introducing changes in the format and its analytical introduction reflect the interest in achieving optimum benefit from the report. But no one can talk about the report's new format or the relevant resolutions that the Council has adopted in this regard without paying tribute to the immense efforts made by Ambassador Mahbubani and members of his delegation, especially Ms. Christine Lee. They assisted with and insisted on a constructive approach and ideas that were met with favourably by Council members and reflected accordingly in this new report.

A number of speakers have spoken on the Council's work in specific areas, such as conflict resolution in Africa, the Middle East, Asia or other regions. There were also some remarks about the Council's missions to a number of conflict areas, and statements in some detail about the importance and perspectives of these missions. Speakers have also referred to the Council's wrap-up sessions over the past few months. In this regard, my delegation is pleased to pay tribute to the efforts by Ambassador Levitte, who introduced an admirable formula under which we would work and which won everyone's praise. My delegation stresses that, in the light of the remarks made by a number of Council members, it is very necessary and appropriate to maintain these wrap-up sessions.

Also, during the period under consideration the Council examined numerous draft resolutions and operational aspects of matters concerning peacekeeping, women and children in violent conflicts, and the question of terrorism. Indeed, the Council has met with great success in dealing with many of these issues and has scored considerable points, especially in the area of fighting terrorism. We join many others in paying tribute to Ambassador Greenstock for his leading role in this regard.

However, we have to state that, during the same period, the Council has failed to follow up and implement some of its resolutions. Many delegations with whom we had discussions in the Council, regarding Africa and other parts of the world, expressed their regret that those resolutions were not implemented. Of course, the subject matter becomes even more sensitive when we reaffirm that the Council's resolutions relate to international peace and security. We think that the lack of follow-up in implementation of these resolutions will have an impact on nations' perception of the Council and on its credibility. We have raised this point time and again in our statements here.

I will not go too far here. I would like to cite one resolution that was adopted a couple of days ago — namely, resolution 1435 (2002). A party directly involved has rejected this resolution and defied it despite the request of all Council members to implement it.

Indeed, the Council has made considerable progress with regard to the implementation of many of its resolutions, in terms of making its work more transparent. It held a record number of meetings compared to past years. More importantly, many of those meetings were open to all United Nations Members so they could express their views and give their own input on the functioning of the Council and issues presented before it. Syria believes that this practice should be maintained, so that the Council will be closer to all issues discussed on the international agenda and to the views of all of the Organization's Members.

Ambassador Mahbubani remarked that, in terms of the Council's work, many aspects have been discussed here to make it more efficient and transparent. However, he also cited several negative points that control our work. We do agree with his analysis of the status of these aspects in the past and of what they would be in the future.

Syria looks forward to more serious work in order to improve the Council's operational methods, in particular the working group on the methods and procedures of the Council. This exercise should be ongoing, because the anticipation of better performance is always in order. The exercise becomes even more relevant when we realize that it has become a pressing demand of all Member States every time the report is discussed in the General Assembly.

Syria looks forward to a serious debate on this draft report in the General Assembly, and we affirm that we will take account of all constructive views that may be made to improve the work of the Council, to make it more responsive to the provisions of the Charter and to the expectations and demands of all United Nations Members.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): My delegation welcomes the holding of today's meeting to discuss the annual report of the Security Council, which will be submitted to the General Assembly in accordance with Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations. We are grateful to Ambassador Mahbubani, the Permanent Representative of Singapore, and to his deputy, Ms. Christine Lee, for their relentless drive in making this year's report the way it is. Ambassador Mahbubani's unyielding determination and his innovative approach based on modern business practices, which some of us might have found a little overbearing, have today lead to a report which the entire membership of the United Nations would be proud of.

The informal working group of the Security Council concerning the Council's documentation and other procedural questions has done excellent work, and we would like to thank the Secretariat and its team for their very good work in the preparation of the report, as well as their invaluable support to the Council.

We also wish to express our warm gratitude to the five elected members who left the Council in December 2001 and who contributed enormously to the Council's work. We wish that they could have been invited to give their views on the report at this meeting today, since they were also involved in the first six months of our reporting period.

Compared to last year's report, the report we have before us today represents a major improvement. It is shorter, reader-friendly, more focussed and more organized. More importantly, it has resulted in substantial savings in publication costs, compared with previous reports.

As for the report itself, let me divide my observations into two parts; first, procedural matters with regard to the works of the Security Council, and

secondly, substantive issues with which the Council has been involved in the year covered by the report.

During the period from July 2001 through June 2002, there was a marked improvement in the working methods of this Council. I will cite a few.

First, there here has been a greater number of public meetings with greater participation of non-Council members, and this has created more openness and transparency in the work of the Council. Secondly, the Council has held a large number of open briefings followed by informal consultations, thus giving non-members the opportunity to be apprised of the latest developments of topics under discussion. Thirdly, there have been several wrap-up sessions, giving members as well as non-members of the Council the opportunity to express their views on topics of interest in a more candid, frank and open manner.

Fourthly, greater interaction has resulted through interventions in Council debates when speakers alternated between members and non-members. Fifthly, the Council has begun a new practice of drawing lots for the speakers list, and this has helped make a fairer and more transparent system for the list.

Sixthly, there has been a series of brainstorming sessions both inside and outside the Security Council. This has helped in preparing comprehensive approaches to many complex and difficult issues. We think that the Council, through very busy with an agenda that is more or less routine, should find more time for informal, candid, free and frank exchanges so it can prepare strategic approaches to various issues confronting us.

The outcome of these procedural innovations has been very positive. We have seen a more vibrant Council with a free flow of ideas and a more interactive and animated exchange of views on many issues. Some cases worth citing are the discussions on Africa held under the presidency of the Minster for Foreign Affairs of Mauritius in January 2002; discussions on the Mano River Union under the presidency of Baroness Amos; discussions on the Democratic Republic of Congo under the presidency of Ambassador Negroponte; and discussions on Angola, Afghanistan, East Timor and many others.

On the substantive issues, the report clearly shows how busy Council was during the period covered. It not only reacted to threats to international and regional peace and security, but was also proactive in dealing with many problems affecting peace and security at both regional and international levels.

The Council energetically reacted to the 11 September attacks and the immediate threats of terror and attacks by adopting resolutions 1363 (2001), 1368 (2001) and 1373 (2001). Likewise, the Council has been fully involved in addressing problems in Afghanistan, Kosovo, East Timor, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Angola and Burundi.

In some cases, however, the Council has not been able to deal with certain problems in the same successful manner. On the Middle East, for example, while the Council made a tremendous leap by deciding in January 2002 to have regular monthly briefings, unfortunately it has not been able to make real progress in helping with the peace process.

On the other hand, the implied condoning by the Security Council of non-compliance with its resolutions by some Members prevented the Council from attaining the desired result. Likewise, the Council has not yet been able to reach agreement on the issue of sanctions.

We have witnessed the proactive role of the Council in dealing with African issues. The creation of the ad hoc Working Group on Africa, to which many of our colleagues have referred, and the productive use of retreats have immensely helped in enhancing the role of the Council. I agree with Ambassador Corr that ad hoc working groups on other complex issues can be useful and can contribute to the work of the Council.

Security Council missions to various troubled areas have also been extremely helpful in addressing the core of the problems and in instilling necessary confidence in the work of the Council. We believe that field visits are essential in helping members understand and assess the real situation on the ground. We therefore encourage such visits, which have also had very positive impacts on the local actors involved in conflict situations.

While we acknowledge the efforts of the Council toward achieving the objectives of the United Nations Charter, as well as the strong commitment of the members to its principles, we believe collective interest should not be sacrificed on the altar of national interest. Preserving unity in the Council should be the

guiding mantra, which every Council member must strive to achieve. Without such unity it would be difficult to project a credible and undivided image, which may give a wrong signal to parties concerned.

In most cases the Council has lived up to its standard and has been instrumental in dealing with those problems. This has contributed to the credibility of the Council by making the body more transparent, answerable and accountable.

We hope that this report will be the object of serious discussion and analysis by the wider membership of the United Nations, because we believe that through such discussion we will be able to strengthen the relationship and the confidence between the General Assembly and the Security Council, enhance the credibility of the Council and above all preserve the centrality of the Council.

Mr. Cunningham (United States): Let me begin by saying that I agree with many of my colleagues around the table that this has been a year of considerable success. We have not reached all the goals we set for ourselves, but we have accomplished quite a bit. It has also been a year of considerable improvement in the working methods of the Security Council, demonstrating flexibility and creativity and adapting ourselves to new challenges and circumstances.

We welcome this year's report to the General Assembly on the work of the Council. As others have noted, it is streamlined and has a much better format, and we commend Ambassador Mahbubani and his colleagues for pressing forward and accomplishing this outcome, which we supported.

The report reflects the continuing progress achieved in balancing transparency with the efficient workings of the Council. This has been achieved in different degrees in at least three separate areas: procedures; new mechanisms for work on Africa and for incorporating the work of troop-contributing countries; and the groundbreaking work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and Ambassador Valdivieso's committee.

During our presidency we worked closely with the Singapore delegation to draw up a comprehensive index of all the procedural notes that have been issued on the workings of the Council. This annotated list provides a clear guide to all Member States on a wide range of procedural clarifications. We also appreciate the efforts of Norway, as Chair of the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, to establish a new mechanism for enhancing the dialogue between the Council and troop contributors. We have made some progress in addressing areas that were of concern, but we believe that there is room for further improvement. We welcome the views of troop-contributing countries in our deliberations as a contribution to better Council decision-making.

I would note that the traditional complaints about the Council's lack of transparency are quickly being overtaken by events. On the threat of global terrorism, we saw the construction of a transparent body — the Counter-Terrorism Committee — which has erased in many respects the old lines and divisions between the Council and the United Nations membership at large. In resolution 1373 (2001), the Council took a radical approach in reaction to 11 September; it was a sweeping resolution imposing a series of legislative and other obligations on all States. Those ambitious goals can be achieved only with transparent information sharing by Member States and in ongoing dialogue between Member States and the Security Council. The Counter-Terrorism Committee is a good example of a practical, comprehensive and operational method for incorporating all Member States into a process of decision-making and implementation stemming from a Security Council resolution. It is also, I think, a prime example of the Council's flexibility, and creativity and ability to adapt to new circumstances.

That said, we are less interested in reviewing where we have been than in planning for where we are going. We will fully support efforts to improve transparency in the future, while maintaining and improving the Council's effectiveness. We have urgent, important and pressing issues before us: peacekeeping, conflict prevention, fighting terrorism and the unique challenge posed by Iraq.

Our responsibilities as a Council and as members of the Council compel us to continue efforts to be frank and effective. For example, there should be no mincing of words with regard to the threat to peace posed by self-proclaimed terrorists, such as the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, Hamas and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade. In the coming days, the Council will be called on to meet the purpose for which it was created, when

it addresses the defiance of Iraq and the threat it poses to international peace and security.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting to consider and adopt the draft report of the Security Council to the General Assembly for the period 16 June 2001 to 31 July 2002.

I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the delegation of Singapore, which has worked tirelessly to make the Council's annual report evolve both in format and in content. The General Assembly's debate on the report of the Security Council, and the comments made at that time, are finally before the Council. We owe that to Ambassador Mahbubani, who has used all his skill, experience, wisdom and faith to make it happen. We also owe much to the insight and commitment of his colleagues. My delegation will have the privilege of presenting the report to the General Assembly next month. I can assure Ambassador Mahbubani that at that time considerable reference will be made to this morning's discussion. I believe that, as submitted, the report will finally enable the General Assembly to assume its own responsibilities and play its role pursuant to Article 15 of the Charter.

The current form of the report will enable the General Assembly not simply to discuss it in the course of one morning and to take note of it, but rather truly to study the accomplishments of the Security Council over a given period. Having said that, let me say that, when the report is considered, my delegation will have the opportunity to express its views on the innovations contained in the report.

Like other colleagues, such as Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani, Ambassador Jean-David Levitte and Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul, I will quickly turn to the issue of sanctions. We attach great importance to improving the implementation of sanctions and to streamlining the functions of the sanctions committees, which are among our goals. I wish to point out, regretfully, that the draft report does not do justice to the rather difficult work of the Working Group on sanctions. Under my chairmanship, the Working Group has held a series of meetings focused basically on a document entitled "Draft conclusion of the Chairman", of 14 February 2001. That exercise has made it possible to make some progress. Real progress was made on procedural issues and issues relating to humanitarian exemptions. The Working Group has acknowledged the need for the sanctions committees to make their decisions known to the entire United Nations membership, except when this could impede the implementation of sanctions. The main disagreement at this time relates to the duration of sanctions. In that regard, the obstacle relates more to methodology than to philosophy. Some delegations advocate time-bound sanctions, while others support sanctions without a time limit with their lifting depending on the conduct of the targeted State.

The Working Group has finally reached agreement on an improved monitoring system to enhance the effectiveness and viability of sanctions and to limit the undesired effects of sanctions on third States.

I should like to bring to the attention of Council members the progress that has been made by the Working Group on sanctions. It should be understood that there will shortly be a briefing in greater detail in order to gather the views of members of the Council on the best possible way to approach the outstanding issues.

Those are the comments that I wanted to make with respect to our consideration of this report. In concluding, I would like to pay tribute to the Mission of Bangladesh to the United Nations, which led the Working Group from 1999 to 2001. They contributed to the progress made in the Working Group during that time.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I speak with great pleasure today, as we consider the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly in its new format. Colombia found it very satisfactory to participate in the initiatives aimed at proposing and reaching agreement on a new format, a process in which the delegation of Singapore played an outstanding role.

This is the appropriate opportunity to present comments so as to contribute to what will be the document considered by the rest of the Member States of the United Nations, to whom we have the obligation of giving an account of our actions. In this spirit, I will offer some reflections.

Does the new report reflect the work of the Security Council? In general, I can affirm that it does. However, the report still portrays the situation in a very

formal manner, with lists of documents, communiqués, resolutions, issues and so on, which take up the greatest part of the body of the report. I recognize that the introduction is a very positive step in the right direction. Here, I should acknowledge that the delegation of the United Kingdom, a permanent member, has shown great support for the process of reforming the working methods of the Council. In future, it will be necessary to intensify those efforts.

What is the usefulness of the report under consideration? The report is a practical reference guide with which the Members of the General Assembly and, in a more global way, the international community can critically observe the Security Council. Here we have a document that even in its size is more attractive, and which gains the necessary attention for the work of this principal organ of the United Nations. Of course, the facts are the main judge of the Council. The threats to international peace and security and the Council's response to them are what enables one to evaluate the performance of the Council. However, the report in its present format gives order to this critical vision, encourages a more informed discussion and exposes members of the Council to a constructive examination by the rest of the United Nations membership.

Has the modification of the report been worthwhile? Yes, definitely. The efforts to improve the report, lasting many months, has proved that it is possible to reform Council practices and customs that had seemed unchangeable. It is a lesson for future generations of Council members, applicable to other practices in the Council's proceedings. It is a lesson to both permanent and elected members of the Council that it is possible to change without creating political situations that are difficult or impossible to control. Finally, it is a lesson for the Secretariat, which early on made public its doubts on the advisability or even the viability of such a Council report.

What is the benefit to the Members of the United Nations? It is difficult to speak of a concrete, tangible benefit that is created by the modified report. However, in general, the new format is a concrete sign of a collective effort towards transparency. It is a clear signal that we want to keep the General Assembly better informed. It is an acknowledgement of the existence of political points of connection between the two bodies. It is a report on the complementarity of the two organs.

Should we understand that the process of reforming the report is now finished? In no way. This report will be submitted for scrutiny by Members of the General Assembly, to which we belong. Based on their comments and suggestions, it might be possible to continue to adjust the content and composition of the report. It is therefore a permanent process of creating a product suited to the demands of the Members of the Organization. It is also an attempt completely in line with the discussions on reforming the United Nations which are taking place based on the report of the Secretary-General (A/57/387) issued earlier this month.

We will also have to reflect on aspects of its content. For example, my delegation is still convinced that the report needs a more detailed section on missions — which in recent years have been extending the presence of the Security Council in the field — including their justification, cost, scope and so on. This issue has sparked great interest beyond the Council, but it is not adequately reflected in the report, as we might have wished.

There are also simple but curious questions, which appear to be the result of a very strict interpretation of the format being used. I am referring, for example, to the section on Nobel Prizes awarded — in chapter 21, perhaps in the second part, on page 285 of the English draft — where it says "Security Council missions or Groups of Experts, none". In other words, this strict format leads to laughable situations, as can easily be seen.

What is the next step? The next step is, of course, to listen attentively to the debate in the General Assembly and to participate very actively in it. That discussion must follow two avenues. One of them is the performance of the Security Council, in other words, the purely political consideration of the action and inaction of the Council. The other avenue of discussion will deal with the characteristics of the report. That discussion will provide the guidelines for our work in coming months.

Having said that, I want to comment on the discussion during this morning's meeting. The comments made seemed very interesting. Because I was absent during the first part of the meeting, I tried to read the text of Ambassador Mahbubani's statement distributed by the delegation of Singapore. This meeting of self-criticism has been very interesting, as

have been the exchanges, which should give rise to new reforms of the Council.

In other words, the Council must do a great deal to create such opportunities, which in truth we have not always sought, to criticise ourselves and improve our work. We should have more such exercises and analyse the substantive parts of our work. Assessing the Council's performance is a very important task that we must continue to perform, as is mentioned in paragraph 16 of Ambassador Mahbubani's written text.

However, I wish to make the point that, as indicated in its agenda, this meeting was convened to consider the draft report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. This meeting should not be made into some kind of wrap-up on the Council's agenda and performance. In other words, we must use this meeting to consider the draft report and convene others to analyse and comment on the Security Council's performance and our assessment of it. That is a separate matter.

Mr. Konuzin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We take a positive view of the draft regular annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. It provides useful and detailed information on the activities of the Council in the course of the year. We thank the Secretariat staff for the high level of its professionalism and for completing its work on schedule. We also thank the delegation of Singapore for its contribution to this work.

We must note the somewhat relentless nature of the Council's work. In the period under consideration, we adopted 73 resolutions and 45 presidential statements. There has been an increase in the number of open meetings and broader use has been made of open briefings. All of this demonstrates the increased transparency of our work.

We believe it important that the report itself clearly reflects the concrete steps taken by the Council to improve its working methods. Also worthy of approval is the fact that the report has become significantly more compact. The principal innovation is the analytical evaluation of the Council's work this year, contained in the report's introductory section. At the same time, we are of the view that the decisions and resolutions of the Security Council speak more objectively for its work.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a few brief comments in my capacity as representative of Bulgaria.

My delegation wishes to begin by thanking the Secretariat for preparing the draft report and the delegation of Singapore for being the moving force behind the improvements that have made it more concise and easier for Members to use. As all have done before me, I thank Ambassador Mahbubani and Minister Lee.

The discussion thus far has been a useful dialogue — or rather, "polylogue" — although, as Ambassador Valdivieso quite rightly said, it has gone in two directions: an analysis of the working methods and procedures of the Council, which is very important, and a discussion of the substance of its work. Since this is the first discussion of its kind, such a dichotomy was perfectly predictable and normal.

I agree with Ambassador Mahbubani that the Council must find a way to meet more often in order to discuss its strategy. The annual retreat organized by the Secretary-General is not enough. That is clear, additional proof of which is provided by this debate. Moreover, I would like in passing to express my support for Ambassador's Levitte innovative idea that the written texts distributed at the outset of a meeting be made part of the official record and that delegations extrapolate in their statements on the basis of these texts. That could only increase and enhance the interactive nature of our discussions.

I must say that one of the first observations to be made on the annual report indubitably is that the workload of the Council has enormously increased. That is due simply to the impact of globalization, as was quite rightly pointed out by Ambassador Greenstock. Globalization requires the Council to do better and to do more. These two somewhat contradictory necessities have caused the time we spend in deliberations to grow exponentially, often testing our physical limits, in order to allow the Council better to communicate with the rest of the United Nations membership and, beyond that, with the other actors in international relations. This is a genuine problem that we have to face. Indeed, on reading the report, I note that what is missing is an account of the relations which the Council and the United Nations in general increasingly and appropriately enjoy with non-State and non-governmental entities. With the advent

of globalization, the role of such actors has become increasingly important and we must take note of it.

There is work to be done in that direction. I know that this is an extremely sensitive subject, but it is a problem facing the entire United Nations system. I believe that the Council has work to do in that regard. Ambassador Levitte talked in this context about the Arias formula meetings. That is a useful format, but, first, it is not used regularly and, secondly, it is insufficient.

A second point I wish to raise in the context of the partnership of the Council with various actors is the importance of partnership not only with Member States, but also with regional organizations. From that standpoint, I believe that the case of the Western Balkans is very revealing. The Council has established an extremely successful and useful partnership with regional organizations, including the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which are ready to assume their responsibilities. In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, this is an extremely successful partnership, in that the Council provides a legal and political framework for the activities of those regional organizations, whose work on the ground is strictly determined by Security Council resolutions.

Africa is another such example. Much of the Council's time — perhaps 60 to 75 per cent — is rightly devoted to the various conflicts in Africa. We should note that the weakness of local African partners means that the Council has to work harder, and I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the creation of the African Union. It is very important for that new regional African organization to become a much more effective partner for the Council in managing various African crises that has been the case in the past.

While on the subject of Africa, I would like to say a few words about Somalia. Here, I agree fully with the comments of Ambassador Strømmen of Norway. The Bulgarian Chairman of the Sanctions Committee on Somalia has taken the necessary steps to revive that dormant Committee. The implementation of sanctions and the arms embargo are only one part of the overall strategy that the Council must draw up with regard to that country, which has been neglected for too long.

I should like in conclusion to refer to the role played by individuals. Ambassador Greenstock mentioned this matter, and I must say that two examples come to mind. The first is the decisive practical role played by Ambassador Levitte in the various Council missions to the Great Lakes region. His energy and determination have counted for a great deal. If we can see some light at the end of the tunnel with regard to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it is due to some extent to his determination. The other example, to which many have referred, is the work done by Ambassador Greenstock at the head of the Committee established under resolution 1373 (2001), which is a model of transparency. I fully agree with all the speakers who have preceded me: the example set by the United Kingdom delegation and its Ambassador is truly one for the Council to follow in its dialogue with Member States.

Two conclusions can be drawn from the Report. The Council has been effective every time it has been united. Members of the Council are aware that the Bulgarian delegation has working tirelessly for such unity, since without unity it is very difficult to preserve the essential and central role of the Council in international relations. Those two aspects — unity and centrality — are obviously mutually enforcing, as can be clearly seen from the report.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

May I take it that the draft report, as corrected, is adopted by the Council?

There being no objection, it is so decided.

This decision will be reflected in a note by the President of the Security Council to be issued as document S/2002/1068.

The Security Council has thus concluded its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.